



FOR ALL MALAWIANS

# Making maize markets work for all Malawians

~EVENT REPORT~

1 October 2015
Bingu International Conference Centre,
Lilongwe

### **About the Malawi Strategy Support Program**

The Malawi Strategy Support Program (MaSSP) is the Malawi office of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). It works closely with the Malawian government, particularly with the Department of Agricultural Planning Services (DAPS) of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development (MoAIWD) to support agricultural growth, food security and poverty reduction through evidenced-based dialogue and decision-making, by providing both technical and analytical support. Particular emphasis is placed on supporting Malawi's Agricultural Sector-Wide Approach (ASWAp) – an agenda designed to accelerate agricultural growth through prioritization and harmonization of public resource allocations.

### **Supporting Evidence-based Agriculture Policy (SEBAP)**

"Supporting Evidence-based Agriculture Policy" (SEBAP), funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is MaSSP's principal project. SEBAP works to promote evidence-based decision-making through the strengthening of policy research capacities in the Ministry, generate policy relevant research outputs, and enhance the impact of research outputs in decision-making through effective policy communication in support of ASWAp implementation.

Go to massp.ifpri.info for more information.

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### **Event Objectives**

The purpose of the symposium "Making maize markets work for all Malawians" was to explore the evidence on best practices for improving the functioning of staple food markets in Malawi. Evidence in the region shows that issues of inflation and price seasonality can negatively impact food security and economic growth, but there are clear policy solutions for addressing these issues. The core objective of the event was to present research and practical experience for policy consideration. We invited stakeholders from government, research, implementation and development partners to engage in the discussion.

Central to the event was the presentation of findings from the MaSSP policy note "Is Malawi's mix of maize marketing policies ultimately harming food security?" The publication (available on our website) provides findings on Malawi's maize market characteristics, types of government interventions in the maize market, and regional evidence on the relationships between how governments intervene in staple food markets, price uncertainty, and producer decision-making.



Republic of Malawi

## SPEECH BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE Dr. SAULOS KLAUS CHILIMA, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI, AT THE

### 2015 MAIZE MARKETS SYMPOSIUM HELD ON 1st OCTOBER, 2015

### AT

### BINGU INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE, LILONGWE

- Dr. Allan Chiyembekeza, MP, Minister of Agriculture, Secretary for Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development,
- Mrs. Erica Maganga, Secretary for Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development,
- Dr. Shenggen Fan Director General of International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI),
- Dr. Ronald Mangani, Secretary to the Treasury,
- Mr. Cliff Chiunda, Secretary for Industry and Trade,
- Senior government officials present here
- All Development Partners present;
- Representatives of the Private Sector and Civil Society organizations;
- Members of the Press;
- Distinguished Guests;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with great humility that this morning I preside over the official opening of the National Symposium on Maize Markets under the theme: "Making Maize Markets Work for All Malawians"

Before I proceed, allow me to join previous speakers in welcoming you all to this very important event. In this regard, I wish to particularly recognize the presence of Dr. Shenggen Fan and all visiting distinguished guests. I welcome you all to Malawi. Please feel free, and feel at home. We are the Warm Heart of Africa.

Dr. Fan, I would like to thank you for your presence today, and for giving me the honor to serve on the Leadership Council of the Compact 2025 initiative. I humbly accept the challenge of working together with other partners towards eliminating hunger and undernutrition by 2025, not only here in Malawi, but globally.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), who through their engagement with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development as well as other stakeholders came together to organize this symposium on maize markets.

### Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A market is constituted by demand and supply side forces and without one of which there would be no market. In an ideal world that relates to liberalization, markets are perfect such that commodity prices are determined by forces of demand and supply.

Maize is a specific commodity in Malawi because of its strategic importance as a staple food crop. Its status as staple food gives it large influence on the economy. It influences inflation, interest rates and, in case of severe shortages that require importing, it also influences exchange rates.

The importance of maize in the economy is therefore enormous. It is indeed both a survival as well as an economic commodity – and as result of this the maize market has its own structure in that, while locally it is freely traded, export of the same is heavily regulated.

It is, therefore, imperative to underscore that the maize market, like any other agricultural crop, is a haphazard market with high levels of uncertainty or predictability because its production is largely rain-fed.

When weather patterns are favourable, there is excess and therefore prices slump. Equally, when weather patterns are unfavourable, there is shortage of the commodity and prices boom.

This shows that maize market in the current set up and market structure is a blessing to a producer in times of a curse because a producer is happy when overall there is shortage and vice versa. This situation can be attributed to the following:

1. Almost everyone in rural areas where there are 84% of Malawians grow maize. Hence, in times of good harvest, supply is unregulated.

- 2. A large part of the maize market is domestic and, because the majority produce on their own, only a few can buy when there is a good harvest a situation that will lead to low demand.
- 3. Predictable maize markets are few and of low price. Only ADMARC comes in as last resort when no other player can buy.

The result of the three points I have raised is that market functionality for maize is weak. This explains why out of the 2.8 million people in need of food aid for the next three to six months, only about 800,000 people will be reached through direct cash transfers, while the rest will be reached with actual maize. Considering the logistical cost and risks, the direct cash transfer would have been preferred if maize markets were functional in all areas of the country.

However, besides ADMARC, the Agriculture Commodity Exchange and warehouse receipt system are emerging as initiatives to promote commodity markets, including for maize.

It is hoped that when these are fully embraced, we will improve maize markets. But most fundamentally, to make maize markets work will require that as a nation we graduate from treating maize as a strategic crop to treating it as any other crop.

That will only be achieved when production shifts from predominantly rain-fed to irrigation, when production volume is increased, and there is predictability of output.

### Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

You might have heard of plans to scale up irrigation farming using the Green Belt Initiative (GBI) Holding Ltd. The reason is purely to increase, not only output, but also productivity and predictability. As a government, we would like to ensure that we reduce vulnerability to shocks.

You may agree with me that after nine years of the Farm Input Subsidy Program declaring food surpluses, a disaster in just one year has rendered the country where it has to resort to importing maize. This is the gravity of market dysfunctionality that we have.

However, we cannot address all these issues at once; and more importantly, we should never think that we can bypass an "agricultural revolution" and still achieve our broader ambitions of economic transformation.

Therefore, as I conclude my remarks, let me request that as you discuss on Making Maize Markets work, you should consider ways in which as a country we could deal with traditions we have held for many years and find ways in which markets would be used as instrument for food security (distribution from areas of surplus to areas of deficit) and income earner. More importantly, discuss ways in which maize markets would be made predictable.

Finally, let me conclude my statement by recognizing the following organizations which collaborated with IFPRI in the organization of this symposium; the Lilongwe University

of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), the Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute of Zambia (IAPRI), the World Bank, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Government of Flanders, the European Union, the UK Department for International Development (DfID), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

With these remarks it is now my privilege to declare the National Symposium on Maize Markets officially opened.

I thank you all and May God Bless Malawi!

### **Event Program, with Presentation Links**

The event program appears below. Following welcome remarks from IFPRI Director General's Dr. Shenggen Fan, the Right Honourable Dr. Saulos Chilima, Vice President of the Republic of Malawi officially opened the symposium. Researchers from IFPRI-Malawi, IAPRI-Zambia, FAO, and the World Bank followed with technical presentations. A panel composed of private sector and government representatives then reflected on the technical presentations and discussed ways forward for improving maize markets in Malawi. Closing remarks for the symposium were made by the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development, Ms. Erica Maganga.

In addition to speakers and presenters from Malawi, Zambia, Rome, and Washington DC, approximately 100 participants from multiple sectors and organizations, representing government, academia, development partners, NGOs and civil society, and the private sector participated in the symposium.

Agenda			
08:00 – 8:30	Registration		
08:30 – 10:00	Official opening  Chair: Dr. Athur  Mabiso, IFPRI	<ul> <li>Introductions: Dr. Athur Mabiso, Senior Program Manager/Policy Analyst, IFPRI-NAPAS</li> <li>Welcome remarks: Dr. Shenggen Fan, Director General, IFPRI</li> <li>Opening remarks: Mrs. Erica Maganga, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development</li> <li>Official opening: Rt. Hon. Dr. Saulos Chilima, Vice President, Republic of Malawi</li> <li>Group photo</li> </ul>	
10:00 - 10:30	Tea break		
10:30 – 11:45	Presentations  Chair: Assoc. Prof. Flora Nankhuni, Michigan State University	<ul> <li>Dr. Karl Pauw, IFPRI <u>Are maize market policies harming food security in Malawi?</u></li> <li>Dr. Antony Chapoto, IAPRI - <u>Policy and price stability: evidence from Southern and Eastern Africa</u></li> <li>Mr. Christian Derlagen, FAO - <u>Incentives for staple food production: a regional perspective</u></li> <li>Ms. Asa Giertz. World Bank - <u>Agricultural risk management for growth and food security</u></li> <li>Questions and answers for clarification</li> </ul>	
11:45 – 13:00	Facilitator: Dr. Suresh Babu, IFPRI	<ul> <li>Panelists</li> <li>Government: Mr. Alex Namaona, Ministry of Agriculture</li> <li>Private sector (commercial): Mr. Dimitri Giannakis, Farmers World</li> <li>Private sector (farmers): Mr. Prince Kapondamgaga, Farmers         Union of Malawi</li> <li>Civil society: Mr. Rex Chapota, Farm Radio Trust/CISANET</li> </ul>	
13:00 – 13:15	Closing remarks	• •	
13:15-	Lunch		

### **Summary of Event**

### **Technical Presentations Session**

The first technical presentation, Is Malawi's mix of maize marketing policies ultimately harming food security by IFPRI's Karl Pauw, focused on the main findings from the IFPRI policy note of the same title. Specifically, it considered features of Malawi's maize markets; evaluated the effectiveness of policies in achieving objectives of food security and price stability; reviewed international experience on staple food market interventions, price stability, and food security; explored guidelines for domestic policy that could improve the functioning of Malawi's maize market; and reflected on responsibilities of other players in Malawi's maize markets, including the private sector and aid agencies. Key findings and recommendations included the following:

- Malawi's maize marketing policies are more discretionary than rules-based. Based on evidence from the region, these discretionary policies contribute to volatile and unpredictable maize prices.
- In contexts similar to that in Malawi, including Bangladesh, government transparency and openness to private sector participation has contributed to staple food price stabilization during times of crises.
- Malawi should:
  - a) continue to invest in ways that facilitates private sector engagement in the maize market, including infrastructure upgrades, providing regulatory oversight, and developing market institutions;
  - b) move towards a rules-based approach to government interventions in the maize market that will still enable government to intervene when necessary but also promote private sector engagement in the market; and
  - c) strengthen its statistical systems to facilitate these interventions.

In the second technical presentation, Policy and price stability: evidence from Southern and Eastern Africa, IAPRI's Antony Chapoto examined the relationship between trade restrictions and price stability using regional evidence on government policy tools and staple food prices. This presentation also highlighted specific country case studies to identify alternative approaches to improving food security and productivity through policy adjustments. Among this presentation's important findings and recommendations were:

- Maize price volatility is significantly higher in countries in the region that actively intervene in their maize markets than it is in countries that make little or no effort to manage prices. Countries that actively intervene in maize markets include Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi.
- In countries where policy interventions are categorized as more predictable, such as Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and South Africa, maize prices also are more predictable.
- Export bans on staple foods do not stop trade from occurring, but rather raise smuggling costs, which depress prices for farmers and raise costs for consumers.
- Zambia's experience in 2013/14 shows the benefits of predictable intervention: government committed to charge commercial mills economic prices for maize from its national reserve, which resulted in increased trader activity, higher spot prices for farmers, and increased maize production the following season.
- More stable maize trade policy in Kenya from 2005-08 resulted in less volatile, more predictable prices.
- Unpredictable government interventions in staple food markets are costly and do not result in clear improvements in price stability and food security. As such, governments should set clearly defined and transparent rules for triggering government interventions and design actions to

facilitate regional trade because of its potential to raise farm-gate prices in areas of surplus and reduce consumer prices in areas of deficit.

The third technical presentation, <u>Incentives for staple food production: a regional perspective</u> by FAO's Christian Derlagen, explored the effects of policy and market structure on maize prices in Malawi in comparison to other countries of the region. Specifically, this presentation looked at the main drivers of the incentives or disincentives that farmers, wholesalers, and consumers face using FAO's Monitoring and Analysing Food and Agricultural Policies (MAFAP) Programme methodology. Key findings and recommendations include the following:

- On average, maize policy and market structure are providing slightly positive price incentives to farmers in the southern region of Malawi. However, many constraints to production growth exist.
- Fluctuations of incentives levels are high, caused by vulnerable (rain-fed) production systems, thin market and ad-hoc policies. Eventually, this volatility negatively affects farmers' supply response.
- The limited share of the maize produced in Malawi that is marketed increases the vulnerability of
  consumers to price increases. Potential to move farmers from being autarkic and not participating
  in maize markets to becoming net sellers exists, but will require increased public investment to
  improve market access, including through investment in storage facilities, rural credit, and rural
  infrastructure.
- From 2005-12, the maize export ban resulted in an effective price support for consumers only in one year, 2012.
- Government should reduce ad-hoc policy measures that have only short-term effects, and develop a more long-term policy plan for the maize market. More predictable policies would mitigate maize market volatility and incentivize farmers towards commercially-oriented production.

In the final presentation of the technical presentation session, the World Bank's Asa Giertz discussed risk management and mitigation in "Agricultural risk management for growth and food security". In particular, this presentation discussed the findings of an agricultural sector risk assessment exercise conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development in 2014. This study examined alternative policy options for managing strategic food reserves that, based on international experience, are more conducive to investments and growth in the farming. The study provided the following important findings and recommendations:

- Agriculture sector production losses due to systemic risks in Malawi have averaged US\$150
  million per year over the past 30 years. Maize is the sub-sector that has suffered the most,
  suffering almost 30 percent of the time and incurring losses bigger than any other single
  commodity.
- Malawi invests too little public resources on risk mitigation (irrigation, extension, research) and, as a result, too much on risk coping (National Food Reserve Agency, ADMARC, Department of Disaster Management Affairs).
- Root causes behind the poor uptake of risk mitigation strategies include weak coordination between government, donors, and NGOs; poor project design; issues related to gender, extension, and seed systems; and limited access to finance and markets.
- Based on farm budget analyses, the maize sector shows little incentive for investment relative to the returns to investment in groundnut and bean.
- Export bans affect farm-gate prices, but retail prices tend to follow regional prices later in the season when consumer demand increases this also during good harvest years. Malawi exhibits high intra-annual and monthly price volatility compared to other countries in the region; and there are limited price differences between surplus areas and deficit areas.

 Malawi needs to strengthen government capacity through improved M&E and information systems. Food security-related policies need to minimize market distortions through the adoption of a rules-based management system.

### Panel discussion: reflections on technical presentations and next steps

Following the technical presentations, representatives from government, private sector, and civil society were given the floor in a panel discussion facilitated by IFPRI's Suresh Babu. They were asked to reflect on the evidence presented in the technical presentations session and discuss ways forward for Malawi. In particular, the panel discussion set out to address the following topics:

- 1. What are the major constraints preventing Malawi's maize markets from functioning better?
- 2. How can these constraints be overcome?
- 3. What can Malawi do to work towards a roadmap for a making maize markets function better?

The panel was made up of Alex Namaona, the Director of Agricultural Planning Services, Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development; Dimitri Giannakis, Farmers World; Prince Kapondamgaga, Farmers Union of Malawi; and Rex Chapota, Farm Radio Trust/CISANET. The discussants were invited to give opening remarks regarding their constituents' role in Malawi's maize markets. They then were invited to respond to findings from the technical presentations and questions from the audience.

The broad challenge facing Malawi that emerged from the panel discussion is how to transform the maize sector from one that is dominated by food security concerns to one that also supports commercial maize production and marketing for both smallholder farmers and larger agribusiness players. Key questions included:

- How can public and private sector work together to create the conditions in which vibrant farmers emerge whose staple food production is predictable and who are motivated to produce surpluses for the market?
- What actions are necessary to encourage traders to respond to market conditions, i.e., absorb and manage surplus production in strong growing seasons and supplement domestic maize stocks when production is down, without generating excessive risk to consumers or traders?
- How can Malawi learn from other countries -- Kenya, Mozambique, and South Africa, for example

   that have tailored staple food market interventions in ways that have made the production,
   storage, and trading of staple foods commercially viable?

In the ensuing discussion, panelists identified the following as potential short- and medium-term steps that could be taken to begin to reorient Malawi's maize market:

**Better information:** Currently, reliable information on maize price and stocks is lacking for all actors in the sector. Farmers need accurate, timely market information to inform their planting and market decisions. Traders and processors require better knowledge of production and domestic supplies to procure, store, and in the medium-term invest in the sector. Government needs more information on commercial production and stocks to ensure that it is fulfilling its food security mandate.

**Investment in the sector:** If the maize sector is going to become commercially viable, it will require investment. Irrigation is one potential area where increased investment could facilitate this

transformation. Other potential investment areas include increasing private sector provision of agricultural extension services to complement government extension, improvements in capacity for value-addition, and a smarter, more efficient input subsidy program.

A platform for communication: Information sharing between government and private sector regarding the operations and regulation of the maize market in Malawi is currently ad hoc. More consistent and formalized communication channels could facilitate access to information, assuage fears and limit speculation in times of doubt, and increase trust between government and the private sector.

The panel discussion concluded with the recognition that each actor in the maize market – including government, farmer, consumer, and trader – has a role to play in making maize production commercially viable while continuing to ensure national food security. However, without collaboration between actors, maize will continue to be politicized to the detriment of Malawi.

### **Discussion and Next Steps**

The purpose of this symposium was to explore the evidence on best practices for improving the functioning of staple food markets in Malawi. Technical presentations from IFPRI, FAO, the World Bank, and IAPRI laid out evidence on the topic. Stakeholder discussions then reflected on the current realities of the maize market in Malawi.

In summary, regional and global evidence indicates that discretionary policies contribute to volatile and unpredictable maize prices, while predictable rules-based policies have contributed to staple food price stabilization during times of crises. Regional analysis shows that decreasing government intervention in maize markets and increasing the predictability and transparency of market interventions is associated with more predictable prices. However, Malawi's maize marketing is currently not providing the level of predictability needed to create better market incentives to reduce price volatility and increase food security.

Furthermore, while export bans are meant to protect consumers by ensuring maize availability in domestic markets, in practice they do not stop trade but rather push it to the informal sector. The costs of informal trade increase, which depresses prices for farmers and raises costs for consumers. Analysis shows that maize export bans in Malawi decrease farm-gate maize prices but maize retail prices tend to increase later in the season when consumer demand increases, regardless.

The limited share of maize marketed in the country increases the vulnerability of consumers to price increases. Agriculture sector production losses due to systemic risks in Malawi have averaged US\$150 million per year over the past 30 years, with maize suffering almost 30 percent of the time and incurring losses bigger than any other single commodity. Rather than protecting Malawi's maize market through export bans, government can incentivize investment in the maize sub-sector and stabilize prices through allowing – and regulating – maize exports, while decreasing farmer risk through a broad set of interventions such as heavy investments in agricultural extension and research, irrigation, and crop insurance, in addition to the Farm Input Subsidy program.

The key policy suggestions that came out of the panel discussion at the symposium are as follows:

- Improve the timeliness and accuracy of information on maize prices and stocks for farmers, traders, processors and government. Initiatives that will support this include:
  - a) improving the accuracy of and public trust in the maize production estimates, which are often considered to be inaccurate;
  - establishing a formal platform for communication between government and private sector on policy actions in Malawi's maize market to provide information, assuage fears, and limit speculation in times of doubt, and increase trust between government and the private sector; and
  - c) developing criteria to guide market interventions in consultation with consumer organizations, producers and private sector.
- Invest in the agriculture sector, in particular to decrease the systematic risks of maize farming in Malawi. Investments in the current Farm Input Subsidy Program should continue, but investments should also be expanded to include irrigation, improved agricultural extension and research, and crop insurance.

### List of Attendees

Noora-Lisa Aberman IFPRI
Kyoko Akasaka JICA
Nick Amin DFID
Suresh Babu IFPRI
John Banda GTPA
Martin Banda USAID

G.M. Bande Cooperative Society

Todd Benson IFPRI
Nikolas Bosscher Flanders
Brendan Brown CIMMYT
Jean-Pierre Busogoro EU

Joshua Cauthen One Acre Fund

Rex Chapota CISANET
Antony Chapoto IAPRI

Alfred Chauwa Nyasa Times
Edward Chilima ECAMA
Chancy Chilimbila UNRCO
Thabbie Chilongo LUANAR

Hamilton Chimala Ministry of Agriculture

Mike Chipalasa FAO Rowland Chirwa CIAT

Anne Conroy Ministry of Finance

Paul Cronjaeger GIZ/ ACE
Patrick Dambula MBC

Tim Deborde EXAGRIS Africa

Paul Demo CIP
Christian Derlagen FAO
Brent Edelman IFPRI
Emmanuel Engulube USAID
Shenggen Fan IFPRI

Bjarne Garden Norwegian Embassy Dimitri Giannakis Farmers World

Asa Giertz World Bank

Isaak Gokha Ministry of Industry and Trade

Charles Govati Agriculture Resources, Ltd.

Carter Hemphill USAID
Phillip Houmand WFP
Cullen Hughes USAID
Carol Jenkins USAID
Babettie Juwayeyi CISANET
M. Kachale OPC

T.W. Kalinde OPC

Willie Kaluluma

M.J. Kambwiri Const. Dept. Secretary

**CIMMYT** 

Siphiwe Kamwendo OPC

Mercy Kanyuka National Statistics Office
Teddie Kapesa Young Entrepreneurs
Prince Kapondamgaga Farmers Union of Malawi

Vinda Kishombe AFDB

James Kumwembe Malawi Voice

Davie Lockie AHCX
Ireen Loti Security
Kennedy Lweya CIMMYT
Arthur Mabiso IFPRI
Chrispin Magombo USAID
Mehdi Mahjoub EU
Mervis Maliketi ECAMA

Yamie Malova Home Affairs/CID

Roman Malumelo Flanders

Hon. Chidanti Malunga National Assembly
Susan C. Malunga Ministry of Education

Innocent Manda Rab Processors

John Mazunda IFPRI Mr. Menyani ZODIAK

Grace Mfune Home Affairs/ CID

Steven Mkweteza Center for Social Science

Mallick Mnela ZODIAK
Kristian Moller ACE
George Momba OPC

Holly Monster US Embassy

Valeria Morau GIZ
Kanozga Moyo CISANET
Ezrya Msosa Security

N.C. Munthali Home Affairs/CID

Charity Musonzo Ministry of Industry and Trade

Readwell Musopole Ministry of Agriculture

Agnes Mwabumba Security Faith Mwafulirwa MBC

M. Mwenechanya Home Affairs/CID

Nick Mwisama IFPRI

Alex Namaona Ministry of Agriculture

Teddie Nankhumwa DFID Lluis Navarro EU

Hastings Ngoma Ministry of Agriculture

Tamani Nkhono-Mvula CISANET

Thor Ofkdal Development Fund of Norway

Karl Pauw IFPRI Edgar Phiri USER George Phiri FAO

Matthew Pickard Save The Children

Florence Rolle FAO

Bashir Sama Rab Processors

Alavik Sandrap Weeffect

Hanna Schanke Embassy of Norway

Lynn Schneider USAID

Innocent Semu Rhema Institute for Development

Meng Shengnan Chinese Embassy

D.C. Shumba DPP

Jan Sinnibe Mbavi Estate Harrineck Thobowa Information

Mwayi Thomas OPC
Milward Tobias Vp office
A. Ungapembe OPC
Coco Ushiyama WFP
Teunis Van Rheenen IFPRI

George Vihl Farm Radio Trust

Kei Yoshimura JICA